AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for producing a fibrous web suitable for the production of hygiene articles, for incontinence articles, disposable diapers, panty liners or sanitary napkins, or absorbent liners, the fiber content of which consists essentially of cellulose fibers of natural origin, said method being an air-laid process comprising the following procedural steps:

a) forming an essentially uniformly thick, dry fiber layer from loose fibers having a low moisture content that is in the range of residual moisture, said layer exhibiting a [loft] thickness;

b) embossing the fiber layer to obtain a fibrous web and forming an embossed pattern with compressed fiber bond zones in which the fibers are essentially interconnected and self-bonding, while preserving said [loft] thickness;

c) moistening the fibrous web with a water-latex mixture on at least one of the outer zones, the water-latex mixture containing 90 to 99% by weight water and 10 to 1% by weight latex; and

d) after the step of embossing, precipitating the latex by drying while bonding the fibers inside and outside the fiber bond zones, whereby the resulting fibrous web exhibits dust due to fluff less than 0.1%, and whereby the mass of latex bound with the fibrous web is 1 to 5 g/m^2 in the dry state, and the resulting fibrous web contains 3% per weight or less latex.

2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the areal weight of the dried fibrous web is set to a range of between 20 and 500 g/m^2.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the upper and lower side of the web are moistened with the water-latex mixture in successive steps.

4. (Previously amended) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the water-latex mixture contains 92 to 99% by weight water and 8 to 1% by weight latex.

5. (Previously amended) The method according to claim 4, characterized in that the water-latex mixture contains 95 to 99% by weight water and 5 to 1% by weight latex.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, characterized in that, during and/or after moistening of the fibrous web, the penetration of the moisture into the fibrous web is controlled with aid of a negative pressure applied to the fibrous web.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the embossing of the fiber layer takes place in a press roll arrangement, whereby at least one roll is a toothed roll.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that, dependent on the areal weight of the fiber layer, different embossing pressures in the range of 30 N/mm to 120 N/mm line pressure are applied.

10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that superabsorbent polymers (SAP), as superabsorbent fibers, are added to the fiber layer or the fibrous web prior to embossing.

11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 10, characterized in that the superabsorbent polymers (SAP) are inserted in the fiber layer while said fiber layer is being formed.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 10, characterized in that superabsorbent polymers (SAP) are added in homogeneous distribution to the cellulose fibers prior to laying the fibers.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that 16 to 49 compressed fiber bond zones are inserted per cm^2 of the fibrous web.

14. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the compressed fiber bond zones each cover an area of 0.03 to 1 mm^2.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the water-latex mixture is applied with aid of rolls as a foam coating or by spraying.

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the drying of the water for precipitating the latex takes place with aid of radiant heat or by blowing warm air through the fibrous web.

17. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that a biologically degradable latex, that is a starch-based latex, is used.

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that, after precipitation and drying, the latex on at least one side of the fibrous web is hydrophilic.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that different lattices are used for the opposite sides of the fibrous web.

20. (Original) The method according to claim 19, characterized in that, after precipitation and drying, the latex on the one side of the fibrous web is hydrophilic and hydrophobic on the other side.

21. (Previously amended) A fibrous web that is suitable for manufacturing hygiene articles, wherein said web has a degree of dust of less than 0.1%, and wherein said web is produced by:

a) forming an essentially uniformly thick, dry fiber layer from loose fibers having a low moisture content that is in the range of residual moisture, said layer exhibiting a [loft] thickness and sufficiently self supporting to support web transfer to an embossing station;

b) embossing the fiber layer to obtain a fibrous web and forming an embossed pattern with compressed fiber bond zones in which the fibers are essentially interconnected and self-bonding,

c) moistening the fibrous web with a water-latex mixture on at least one of the outer zones, the water-latex mixture containing 95 to 99% by weight water and 5 to 0.1 % by weight latex, and

d) precipitating the latex by drying while bonding the fibers inside and outside the fiber bond zones,

and whereby dust due to fluff less than .1% and the mass of the latex bound with the fibrous web is 1 to 5 g/m^2 in the dry state, and the resulting fibrous web contains 3% per weight or less latex.

22. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, characterized in that the areal weight of the dried fibrous web is set to a range of between 100 and 200 g/m^2.

23. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 10, characterized in that the superabsorbent polymers (SAP) are superabsorbent fibers.

24. (Original) The method according to claim 23, characterized in that the superabsorbent fibers are inserted in the fiber layer while forming layers.

25. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 23, characterized in that superabsorbent fibers are added in homogeneous distribution to the cellulose fibers prior to laying the fibers.